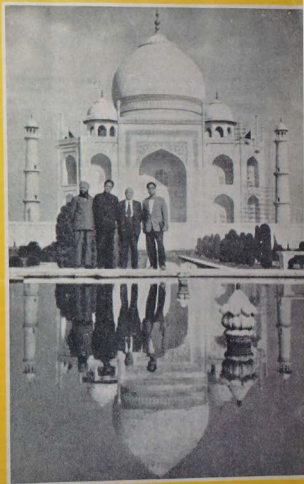


# INDIAN DIARY

1954



By HARRY POLLITT

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*by*  
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# INDIAN DIARY

By HARRY POLLITT

*December 12.*

**I** COULD not sleep last night through excitement at landing at Bombay this morning. I was on deck at 6 a.m., just as we began to enter the estuary at Bombay.

It was a wonderful spectacle. The hills on the starboard side behind which the sun was rising made a splendid dash of colour. On the port side the first outline of Bombay began to appear.

By 7 a.m. the Batory had tied up at the quayside. It was 8 a.m. before the Indian officials came on board for all the usual formalities.

By 9 a.m. I heard a tremendous shouting, but the only words I could make out were "Harry Pollitt." Soon hundreds of workers appeared on the quay; they were waving red flags and calling for me.

Everybody on board came running on deck to see what the excitement was about, and the looks on the faces of my fellow passengers, and especially the Old India Hands, when they found it was myself who was being greeted, was something I will never forget.

I finally got through the Customs, everybody being very kind and helpful, particularly the luggage porters, who were all coming up to shake my hand.

But when I got into the street, what a sight met my astonished gaze.

I was greeted by Comrades Mirajkar, Chary and Prasante.

Mirajkar, of course, is one of the veterans of the Communist Party of India and one of the Meerut prisoners, along with Ben Bradley and Lester Hutchinson.

I had to walk through a solid wall of enthusiastic workers. At every few yards I was garlanded and given bouquets, until by the time I reached the car I was weighed down with flowers.

Arrived at my hotel, and was soon greeted by Comrade Ajoy Ghosh, the general secretary of the Indian Party, and Comrade Dange, well known to British workers.

Afterwards had a rest, because the morning's excitement had been very exhausting.

In the afternoon did a four-hour tour of Bombay. It's a great city, but also one where the contrast between rich and poor is sharper than I have ever seen before.

Visited the splendid park on the Malabar Hills, and looking across the bay saw the Batory steaming away on the last lap of its journey to Karachi. I had spent some of the happiest hours of my life on the Batory.

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of our English dancers green with envy, so beautiful were her hands, movements, postures and muscle control.

What a small place the world is. While walking along the sands, looking at the people and trying to take everything in, I noticed a group of 25 young Bombay workers sunbathing and singing. One of them broke away and came running toward me. He stopped:

"Comrade Pollitt, I recognised you. I was at the docks yesterday. Please come and speak to my comrades of the Young Workers' League."

This evening I was on my way to the working-class district of Bombay to speak at my first demonstration in India.

What a huge variety of colour was to be seen in the streets! The beautiful saris of the women, the white clothes of the men, and a variety of costumes and styles of dresses and headgear that certainly made it a memorable sight.

But always you were brought up with a jerk, when some appalling aspect of human wretchedness and misery inevitably forced itself before your eyes.

Arriving at an open space I found a vast crowd squatting on the green and thousands more standing as far as the eye could see.

I was introduced by Comrade Ajoy Ghosh, and then the old Indian custom of placing garlands of flowers around the necks of those you love and respect was shown to me.

I must have had over 50 such garlands placed around my neck by comrades representing every section of the working-class movement in Bombay. They had to be taken from me in relays. I was literally being smothered in beautiful flowers and bouquets.

To me it was deeply touching, and I know that tears were streaming down my cheeks.

*December 14.*

**F**OR many more years than I care to remember, I used to address all letters to my Indian comrades to Raj Bhuvan, Sandhurst Road, Bombay.

Now the Central Party Offices are in Delhi, but Raj Bhuvan, which means People's House, is still used by the Party as the headquarters of its publishing activities.

Our full-time comrades in leading positions lead a very austere and frugal life.

They not only work in Raj Bhuvan, but live there with their families. It really means they are on the job all the time.

We went over the printing house, which prints all the publications of the Party, and with the limited facilities they have at their disposal they work wonders. For example, they have no linotype machines or modern flatbed machine or other equipment, but their work reaches a very high standard indeed.

They have printed a very fine edition of Comrade R. Palme Dutt's book, *The Crisis of Britain and the British Empire*, which sells

It will be a long time before I forget what I saw in the working-class district of Bombay. Only once before had I seen such poverty and dreadful housing conditions and that was in the West Indies in 1938, but Bombay was worse.

What a commentary on the greed and rapacity of British imperialism that after all the millions they have robbed from the workers of the West and East Indies, such conditions as these should exist!

Had dinner and a long talk with Comrade Ghosh.

Went to bed, dead-beat, but could not sleep because of thinking about what I had seen all day.

*Journal of Harry Pollitt*

Early morning, under a grilling sun, I made another tour round the city, and to the seaside place called Juhu.

I was literally fascinated by the multitude of sights that I saw. Performing monkeys, mongooses and snakes. I had seen pictures of snake-charmers at work, but I have never seen so many in real life before.

I watched one girl dance on the hard sands who would make many



*Ajoy Ghosh and Harry Pollitt*

are being greeted by Red Flags, who is going to take the lead?" Dead silence. I looked out then and saw a crowd and Red Flags. The plane came to a stop. Every passenger seemed to be bearing himself with a demeanour which said, "Well, it's not me."

I finally emerged, and as soon as my feet were on the ground found myself once again surrounded by comrades, with flags, garlands, and bouquets.

I thought to myself, "Fancy this happening at London Airport!" I was garlanded 25 times. I could hardly walk off the tarmac, which did not prevent me singing (to myself, of course) a favourite old ballad of my father's: "She wore a wreath of roses, the first time that we met."

A short speech of thanks from me, and then off in a car to Delhi. I suppose it is about ten miles to the town, so I got a good chance to see this and that.

Among which was the "Lodge," where the British Viceroy of India used to live. I wish you could all see it. What a palace! What grounds! And then, being what I am, I thought of all the people I had seen with nowhere to lay their heads, except on the pavement.

A wash and brush up, and then went to see the Parliament House. A splendid building. I was able to obtain a seat in the Distinguished Visitors' Gallery, and listened for a short time to an interesting debate on the Special Marriages Bill.

There had recently been an important by-election in South-East Calcutta, which everyone had expected the Congress candidate to win.

To their consternation the Communist candidate, Comrade Gupta, won it hands down.

Comrade Gupta is blind, but this dreadful affliction has not stopped him from giving a lifetime of service to the working class of Calcutta. I was proud to be introduced to him.

Just before I got into bed a comrade came to see me. He showed me a newspaper in which it was stated the Ceylon authorities had distributed 10,000 copies of my photograph so that every police officer at ports and railway stations would recognise me if I attempted to enter Ceylon.

I regret that no reward was issued for apprehending the body. But I had to laugh also.

I remembered saying facetiously to the pressmen at Southampton that I would get into Ceylon by emulating the gentlemen in the Bible who once parted the seas and walked through them. I suppose the Government of Ceylon took it seriously.

*December 17.*

**I** HAD begun to think that life had no more surprises for me, but I was mistaken.

Left Delhi at 8.30 a.m. for Amritsar, and arrived at the airport at 10.30 a.m. While coming in to land I could see scores of red flags and a great crowd of people.

at 8s. 6d., which, by Indian standards, is a very high price, and yet they have already sold over 2,000 copies.

I discovered that when I mentioned Dutt's name it found no response, but when I then mentioned R.P.D. a light came into their eyes, and you would have thought I had named some god. Oh, Shades of the Notes of the Month in the *Labour Monthly*!

I spent all afternoon preparing my speech for the important public reception which is being given to me this evening in the Sunderbail Hall by the Bombay Committee of the Communist Party.

It is the second largest hall in Bombay and seats 1,500. Long before the meeting started every seat was occupied. Every gangway was crammed with people sitting on their haunches.

The back of the hall and the platform also were crammed, and my speech had to be relayed outside to hundreds who could not get into the hall.

I was begged to make a long speech. Well, I did, because the comrades said it "was a special kind of audience and everybody understood English."

I must say you could have heard a pin drop throughout the entire proceedings.

At the end of my speech, which I am afraid lasted 1½ hours, no one stirred. The chairman announced the meeting was at an end. No one stirred, only cries of "Please speak a bit longer." I was dead beat, however, speaking so long in such heat, even if I had been doing it in my shirt.

The International was sung in Hindi.

Still the audience did not move. So I emulated what Tom Mann used to do, and called for "Three cheers for a lasting peace that would be heard in Washington."

That did it, and I am sure they could be heard in Washington. So ended one of the most impressive experiences in my memory.

And so to bed, to get ready for my journey to Delhi tomorrow.

*December 16.*

**I**T'S been another of those times when you say "It's been quite a day."

Left Bombay Airport at 8.30 a.m. after a journey from the air terminal office lasting about 45 minutes, which took us right round the Marine Drive and through many interesting parts of Bombay and its environs.

I wonder just how many people sleep out in the streets all night in Bombay, and I also wonder if there is another place in the world where so many well-to-do citizens take their morning constitutional along the Promenade at 7 a.m.?

The journey to Delhi seemed to me to be across one of the most barren stretches of land. Here and there you saw a few green patches which had been tilled, and now and again a cluster of villages.

Arrived at Delhi Airport at 12.15 p.m., and as the plane was taxi-ing to the Reception Hall one of the passengers said: "I see we





*At the Martyrs' Well, Amritsar*

Immediately the plane had stopped before the reception hall the great crowd had surged on to the tarmac, and on emerging from the plane I was met by representatives of the Communist Party, trade unions, peasant organisations, peace movement and various cultural organisations.

I immediately recognised the Communist Member of Parliament for the area where the airport was situated. He had acted as an



*Arrival at Amritsar*

interpreter for me at a conference in Moscow in 1934. I was also glad to greet my old friend Mulk Raj Anand, the famous Indian author, who was on a visit to his native town of Amritsar.

Outside the aerodrome I made a short speech in which I expressed the hope that before my visit was at an end the people of Amritsar would know there were other kinds of British citizens than General Dwyer, the butcher of Amritsar.

Off we went to the town, and it was quite a triumphal procession. I was very moved when I heard that scores of the people who had greeted me at the airport were peasants who had come from 20 miles and more.

Our first stop was at the Memorial Gardens, which marked the spot where, on April 13, 1919, the massacre of principal Amritsar citizens took place on the instructions of General Dwyer.

About 200 present. Then paid a visit to the offices of the Party paper, again garlanded, and then a visit to the Party offices.

The comrades begged me to cancel my other engagements so as to visit Kashmir. Oh, what inducements they held out to me! The finest garden in all the world! What a welcome I would get!

I nearly fell for all this seduction, but, being a strong-willed person, kept humming to myself:

*Pale hands I loved,  
Beside the Shalimar;  
Where are you now,  
Where are you now?*

This brought noon, and we were off to Amritsar once again. Got there rather late. Left Amritsar at 5 p.m. and arrived at Delhi Airport at 6.30 p.m. Met by the comrades. An excellent dinner in the Volga Restaurant, and then what do you think happened?

I got into a jeep (I noticed it gloried in the new name of Land Rover) and we did some roving. I can assure you. We left Delhi at 8 p.m. for the 125-mile drive to Agra, where the Taj Mahal is situated.

What a drive and what dust! I mustn't repeat here a rather vulgar saying about dust, but I assure you that when the Land Rover pulled up outside the Taj Mahal at 11.50 p.m., precisely, you could not see either the driver, my two interpreters or myself for dust.

Anyhow, here we were, and another dream of my boyhood days now about to be realised.

We were about to see the Taj Mahal in the light of an almost full moon, and the guide books had told me this was when it ought to be seen in all "its irresistible beauty."

We entered the portals of the outer building, and there before my eyes was the Taj Mahal!

I have not the command of language or the poetical expression to describe this scene. All I can say is that it just took my breath away to gaze on such a scene of extraordinary loveliness. Never, never, as long as I live, will I ever forget it.

Slowly we walked down the majestic marble path to the Taj Mahal. We went all round it. Our guides explained its history. But I seemed to have lost the power of listening. I could only gaze spellbound at all this exquisite loveliness.

At last we tore ourselves away. Went back to Agra, found a hotel, and at 2 o'clock decided it was time for bed—but not without the resolve that having seen the Taj Mahal by moonlight, we would see it in sunlight also the next morning.

#### *December 19.*

**O**NCE more emulating the lark, we were up and about early, and on our way to the Taj Mahal again, but instead of being greeted by larks, we found a man playing his pipes outside the hotel, and persuading a great cobra to go through its dancing performance.

I laid a wreath in the centre of the memorial, and observed a solemn two minutes' silence, which was what I thought all that is best among the British people would expect me to do.

From there we went to the Golden Temple, the most famous and sacred shrine of the Sikh population of the Punjab. I was welcomed by the vice-chairman of the organisation, and then taken round the temple by a Sikh gentleman.

I was presented with a scarf and two religious symbols, and I must be one of the few foreigners who have been taken into the innermost parts of the temple and shown the jewels, gold and pearls whose value no one can compute.

My greatest and never-to-be-forgotten thrill was when I was introduced to the veteran Indian comrade Bala Sobhan Singh.

He is 83 years of age, 35 of which have been spent in Indian prisons. Bent almost double through the effects of imprisonment and hunger strikes, as I looked at him I thought how little in Britain we know of sacrifice for the cause.

Amritsar gave the impression in parts of having been subject to heavy bombing.

On making inquiries I found what I had seen was the result of the Communal Riots caused by the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947.

I was told that it was estimated that nearly a million people of all religions lost their lives in this regrettable dispute, and because Amritsar is only 16 miles from the Pakistan border, and there was a flow of refugees both ways, its loss of life and property had been very heavy indeed.

From there to a great demonstration in Amritsar. There were many thousands present, and what a sight it was! All squatting on the ground as far as the eye could see. The tall, handsome bearded men, with their multi-coloured turbans, the women in their beautiful dresses.

A sword was presented to me—the highest honour of all to anyone visiting the Punjab. I hope my speech made the comrades feel their respect worth while.

I listened to a play about life in the countryside and the struggle against landlords and money-lenders, which was splendidly performed.

Had dinner very late and then to the hotel, dead beat but very happy. Punjab the Valley of the Five Rivers—partition means that the Indian part has only two of these rivers now.

But what lovely country it is, and how proud its citizens are they belong to it, and how sorry they are it has been divided.

*December 18.*

**U**P with the lark, after a very, very cold night, but as fresh as a daisy.

Addressed a meeting of all the leading members of the Communist Party in the district on the situation in Britain and the work of our Party.

It is the loveliest thing I have ever seen in my life and was presented by the Delhi district committee of the Party.

I keep writing "What a day!", and so I must write it again.

I have seen the Taj Mahal, the Agra Fort, where I noticed a tribute to Mr. John Strackey for his care of Indian culture. I have seen the Qutab Minar, and bullocks, monkeys, parrots, performing bears, vultures, camels, little donkeys carrying great loads.

But later this morning I had the greatest thrill of all.

And that is quite another story.

*December 20.*

**I** WAS leaving the hotel in Delhi this morning, and going down the stairs met the inevitable Scotsman.

"Well, I'm blown, fancy seeing you here, Harry! You don't remember me, do you?" I looked a little, then replied: "Yes, you stayed in Jean Cowe's house in Scott Street, Glasgow, when Randall Swingle and I stayed there, when Malcolm McEwen fought a by-election in Dumbarton."

"Right first time, Harry—all the best!"

Then off to the Delhi aerodrome in that Land Rover. The driver is a Sikh comrade who fought with the British Army in Italy during the Second World War.

He was chosen to take part in the Victory Parade in London in 1946, but his political opinions became known and that finished it.

But what a driver! What he can make that Land Rover do is nobody's business.

Left Delhi Airport at 8.15 a.m. and after a pleasant journey touched down at Calcutta Airport at 12.15 p.m. What a sight met our eyes! There were hundreds of Red Flags, and thousands of the working people of Calcutta waiting to greet me.

Just one seething mass took hold of me as soon as I put my feet on the tarmac.

I was garlanded until I lost count. At one time in the proceedings I could not see an inch before me.

The car started, but after about 15 minutes a cry went up, and another crowd of people blocked the road completely. Poor people, their poverty stuck out a mile.

They were refugees from East Pakistan. They brought their flowers and garlands, women and little children offering up a single flower. I was crying, and it's no use making any bones about it. I noticed the appalling conditions they were living under, and I shall look upon their floral tributes to me as one of my most precious memories.

The weather was very warm and what with all the garlands, the heat and excitement, I felt almost all-in. But arriving at the hotel, a bath, forty winks, and at 3.30 p.m. I was ready for anything—and I was soon to have it in plenty.

A number of the comrades came to discuss the demonstration I

A glorious sight met our eyes as the sun poured its rays all round the Taj Mahal, which we went all over again.

Rightly described as one of the Seven Wonders of the World, it deserves such a description. It was built by Emperor Shah Jahan as an immortal tribute to his beloved wife. It was built of pure white marble, and when the sun is shining it dazzles the eyes to look at it.

We couldn't stay any longer. We had to visit Fort Agra. Another exciting experience. A gigantic fort inside of which are several wonderful palaces. We hadn't time to take it all in. We were pondering over this and that as we stood in the royal harem of one of these magnificent palaces.

Suddenly I heard a noise, saw four youths postulating and giving the salute we knew so well in the days of the Spanish Civil War. They came to me, and before I knew where I was I was garlanded four times with garlands.

Now I was to be off to Delhi. As we left the Agra Fort and were going home, it was to be greeted with cries of "Long Live Harry" and "Long Live Harry" prompted a regular of sources to reduce his price from £100 to £50.

It was the Land Rover jeep once more. How different to travel through the countryside in darkness and in daylight! Never did I think such poverty existed!

You can read the dry statistics, you can read words, you can try to imagine what it is like. But you have to see the poverty, the people, the houses they live in before this awful soul-searing poverty can make you understand the actual reality of the situation.

It drove me into depression. I tried to think of what I would do if my people had to endure such conditions. The bitterness of thought, the hatred of the rich landlords and moneylenders, was profound in the extreme.

The whole scene as we passed through village after village, was only relieved by the colourful and gay dresses of the peasant women, who seemed in this manner to be hurling defiance and a challenge to the whole of their ghastly squalid surroundings.

We passed caravans drawn by bullocks and camels. We saw hundreds of monkeys and parrots. We passed a field where hundreds of vultures were to be seen. They seemed to be saying, "We'll get you all yet for your folly in tolerating such conditions!"

At 5 o'clock we were back at the hotel. A wash and brush up, and then off to address a demonstration in Old Delhi. What a demonstration—and what a galaxy of pressmen!

It is a huge field, right in front of Delhi's famous mosque. It is quite dark, but a full moon. Thousands and thousands of people are squatting in front of the platform and standing as far as the eye can see.

I am garlanded by various Delhi democratic organisations, and then I receive one which I shall wear at our own Party congress.

They lasted non-stop for an hour. It seemed half of the audience could follow me in English.

The "Internationale" was sung, then I mounted the dais again, took out my handkerchief, *à la* Tom Mann, and called for "Three cheers for peace that will be heard in Washington," and I'm sure they were—and that was that. Or was it?

Tired? Not at all!

Happy? Twice over!

Cossnight!

*December 21.*

**F**IRST thought this morning is to try to remember how many years it is since I first began to send congratulatory telegrams to Comrade Stalin on the occasion of his birthday, which would have been today.

Therefore glad to see the Communist Party daily newspaper in Calcutta had made a feature of this fact in its issue today.

Up as usual. Then to make a speech to the Bengal Provincial Conference of the Communist Party. Garlanded no end. This time with a difference. The flowers seemed to be tiny lotus; their perfume was enchanting, and I was informed that they are called "Nights of Fragrance."

Then to inspect the Party office, the Party bookshop, and the Party press. There everything is hand-set, and I only wish everyone employed on the *Daily Worker* could see the conditions under which our Calcutta comrades get their daily newspaper out.

It would make them all think, and no mistake.



*Part of the Calcutta Demonstration*



*At Calcutta Airport*

was to address at 4.0 p.m. Most of them were young and had joined the Communist Party while they were studying in England.

Now any public speaker, if he cares to tell the truth, is always interested in how many people he will be talking to. And being a Truthful James I asked the simple question and received the reply, "100,000 at the least."

I looked at the comrade and he looked at me. No words were spoken, but I could not help thinking of what I always tell the British comrades when they say "Harry, we've booked another hall for an overflow," and I always make the reply, "Fill the hall you've got, and it will be fine."

Off we went to a kind of huge Hyde Park. I couldn't see a thing for people. I had to fight my way to the platform, and was exhausted when I got there. But then the sight of that vast audience! Talk about a little drop of what you fancy does you good—I felt I was walking on air.

When I had to mount a raised platform and "show my face," I just couldn't see where the audience ended. I wondered if an Atlee or a Deakin could command such an audience anywhere in the world.

The garlanding and gifts of bouquets came to an end. One comrade gave me a splendid piece of sculpture of Comrade Stalin he had made, and then I was called upon to say a few words.



Through Calcutta streets. I wonder exactly how many human beings in Calcutta sleep in the streets. There must be thousands. It is pitiful to see them stretched out this way and that. No one seems to take the slightest notice of something that is a great shock to me.

I suppose, having seen it in every city I have been in, I should have begun to get used to it. But I can't. It shocks me. And when, as I have seen, large rats move in and about these pavements, those who know me best will know how I feel.

We board the plane and we're off. A lovely sunrise—and then I fall asleep.

First stop is Nagpur at 10 a.m. We got there dead on time to wait for the plane from Delhi to Madras. When it comes in, one of Noel Coward's "Mad dogs of Englishmen" gets off, meets another of the same breed, and they get talking.

Now I am no eavesdropper, as anyone can tell you, but they talk in the Oxford accent, so loud and so unmistakable that you cannot help hearing what is being said. It goes like this: -

"Nice to be on terra firma. Never feel sure until I am. Very hot, don't you think?" "Have you read Pollitt's speeches? Why the devil did they let the fellow in? Wonder what he is up to?"

I never batted an eyelid. Then came the call. "Passengers for Hyderabad and Madras please take their seats."

As far as I have been able to see it has all been very flat country we have flown over. Then we are going down and the Hyderabad Aerodrome is in sight. The nearer we get, the clearer becomes the spectacle of red and blue flags. You know what the red stands for, and the blue is for Peace.

The "mad dogs" have also seen this sight, and they exchange glances as much as to say: "My God. He must be with us!"

He was. He got down, and at once was surrounded by comrades, flags and flowers.

I was informed that I was being housed in the State of Hyderabad Government Guest House.

I had an excellent lunch and a couple of hours shut-eye. Then off to a public meeting.

I have previously remarked how in the most squalid villages the women seemed to rebel against it by the colours of their saris, which were mostly of red and gold.

But here in Hyderabad they took on the most beautiful and varied colours. When I remarked on it I was told in very proud tones: "We pride ourselves on our colours; we make the fabrics here, and we dye them ourselves."

At last we arrived at the hall where the meeting was to take place. I tried to do what was expected. At the end I was garlanded by a young comrade who, as he mounted the platform, was received with great applause.

It turned out he was 18 years of age, had been sentenced to death for having been allegedly concerned in the disturbances which shook

A quick lunch, and off again. I visited the dock, jute and engineering and ship repair areas. It was dreadful.

First, we stopped at the Indian Seamen's Union offices. Then to the "hostels" where Indian seamen waiting to be taken on for a ship are supposed to live.

Never in my wildest experience of slum conditions have I seen anything like it. You won't believe me if I attempt to describe it, but I will just say this as a general remark.

The worst slum in Britain is a paradise compared with the best conditions the mass of the workers of Calcutta have to live in. And this is true of seamen, engineers, jute and textile workers.

Human beings with hearts that can beat and minds that can think were never meant to live in such conditions.

After seeing the seamen's "homes," although I went through every street in a part of the working-class areas of Calcutta, I just could not get out of the car and go into any more "houses." What I saw from the car was enough.

One of the P. and O., the British-India Shipping Company, directors, chairmen who have made rich and gotten gains out of this get-for-and misery, this shameful poverty and degradation; there is blood and infamy on every penny of it, on this you have extorted from the cheap labour of the Indian workers.

There are rich and poor in every capitalist city. There are West Ends and East Ends in every capitalist city. But surely to whatever gods there may be, there cannot be any greater contrast between the two than here in Calcutta!

The most depraved human being in Britain would not keep a dog under such conditions.

Feeling like nothing on earth after such sights—back to the other Calcutta. The neon lights. The great palaces. The posh hotels. The boulevards, the lovely parks and lakes—and studded everywhere, monuments to such creatures as Lord Canning, streets named after the arch-robber Sir Robert Clive, and the memorial to Queen Victoria, a cheap imitation of the Taj Mahal.

This is where I really wanted to spew in utter disgust.

A late meal in an hotel patronised by the British citizens still making money out of the exploitation of the Indian working people. They are all in evening dress.

There is only one thing I wish I could do to them. Not murder, not violence. Only just go and make them eat and sleep in the conditions of the working people who live in the other Calcutta.

My only consolation is that this pack of parasites will be driven out of India, as surely as the British rulers who exercised their complete domination of India have already been thrown out.

*December 22.*

**U**P at 4 a.m. Funny how you cannot sleep however late you go to bed when next morning you know you have to catch a plane at some unearthly hour.

in Hyderabad itself. Some of these comrades were in for five, ten and 20 years.

I was allowed to see 15 of them in groups of five. Now what can you say to comrades under such circumstances and serving such sentences? Well, I tried to say it, and the look in the eyes of these comrades was such that no pearls or diamonds could ever reflect.

But let me tell this little incident. The last five prisoners had been brought in. We shook hands, etc., etc. Then a long silence, and one of the comrades still under the death sentence, whose eyes had never left off looking at me, exclaimed: "You are an old man. I always thought you were a young man."

I laughed. Was it a compliment or a back hander?

All these lads were either students or peasants. All of them in their twenties and thirties. No wonder I looked old to them.

One comrade, serving a 20-year sentence, struck me by his thoughtful demeanour. I asked him, was he married and had he children.

A tear came into his eye, and he replied, "No, but my mother comes to visit me once a month, and I am proud to say she has collected more signatures to the Peace Petition than anyone else in the State of Hyderabad."

All of them asked me to thank D. N. Puri, Q.C., for what he did to save them from the hangman's noose.

Now to the People's Bookshop. A fine shop with a fine display. Noticed Page Arnot's miners' history, George Thomson's *Marxism and Poetry*, Frank Hardy's *Power Without Glory*, and, would you believe it, a single copy of *Serving My Time*.

From here I went to the State Parliament. What a splendid building this is. I was ushered into the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery. Noted the workmanlike set-out of the Parliament, the tip-up chairs and tables for every member, the loudspeaker arrangement so that everybody could hear what was going on.

I had not been there very long before a tap on the shoulder and the Finance Minister informed me that "the Chief Minister of the Hyderabad Parliament would like to receive me."

Off I went to the Chief Minister's room, and received a very cordial and friendly welcome.

*December 24.*

**O**UT and about to pay a number of courtesy calls on various public figures who have expressed a desire to meet me.

I now gather that at my public meeting in Hyderabad, all the leading people of the town were present.

My speech got very great publicity in the Press, and I am sure that if some of my Labour Correspondent pals in London could see the "splash" I am getting, they would wonder what the world was coming to.

Learn the plane to Madras will be two hours late owing to fog in Delhi. Now where have I heard that word "fog" before? I wonder what it is like in London and whether its citizens are having a

Telengana, of which Hyderabad is the centre, and was subsequently reprieved and put on parole.

All I can say is: "Comrade. I only wish your flowers were everlasting," because that was in my thoughts.

Our driver expressed the thought that I might like to drive past the estate of the Nizam of Hyderabad. I did. I had heard all about this family's goings on when I was a kid, and many more times later from our "society columnists."

It is some estate. They say that one Nizam had 400 wives. He's welcome to the lot of them.

But there's one thing I know. I would not have on my conscience what these Nizams, Maharajahs and Ali Khans have on theirs for anything in the world.

*December 23.*

**T**EN a.m. found me visiting the offices of the Democratic Front. They were formerly the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Nizam's armed forces.

In Hyderabad the Democratic Front won 44 seats in the State Parliament (House of Assembly) and seven seats for the Central Parliament in Delhi.

I addressed the Parliamentary representatives of the Democratic Front on the situation in Britain and answered a few questions.

Then to see the principal sights of the city. The never-ending walls surrounding the palace of the Nizam of Hyderabad. It reminded me of the walls around the Duke of Bedford's estate at Woburn.

I was told the Nizam still has so many wives that a substantial trade union could be formed among them if only an organiser could get inside. I at once offered my services, but was turned down because such a union would not be recognised by Deakin and Williamson.

Hyderabad is a city of magnificent buildings. But it also has the other side where the workers live. I have already referred to the colours of the women's dresses. Again I was struck by this.

I saw women pulling lawn mowers in posh gardens, working in rice fields, breaking stones for road repairs, carrying heavy burdens in the streets, and coming out of factories—but in all cases their saris were lovely, multicoloured, and a feast for the eyes. Oh, what could it be like under Socialism!

I was off to see the university. What a spacious and magnificent place it is. Oh, Cambridge and Oxford, you ought to see it. I have not seen anything to compare with it—except the new Moscow University.

A little pause for lunch, and off again. This time to the Hyderabad prison, which I had got permission to enter (and, let me add, leave).

You all know of the historic struggles in the agricultural areas of Telangana, where land was distributed to the landless peasants.

There were 150 comrades in prison in connection with these events throughout the State of Hyderabad, of whom 85 were in the prison

make a short speech, and sign autographs. It was about four o'clock this morning when we stopped at Golden Rock Station.

There were thousands of workers here who had been up all night waiting to express their greetings. They were all squatting on the platform, and it was a truly amazing sight.

At 7.20 a.m. dead on time, we reached Madura, and what happened here is nobody's business. The station was jammed; the great Square outside the station and all the surrounding streets were jammed.

There must have been at least 20,000 people here. Comrade Ajoy Ghosh, the general secretary of the Communist Party of India, and myself then had to inspect a very smart guard of honour drawn up outside the station.

This done, we all advanced to a platform and, bless my soul, I looked round and there was a great elephant covered with the Red Flag, and a Sabu-type of boy sitting cross-legged on the elephant's head with his Red Flag emblazoned with the Sickle and Hammer. After this I was ready for anything, and I'm bound to say I got it.

Well, all in all, it was some Christmas Day, and once in a lifetime will be enough.

It was raining in Madura, quite unexpectedly for the time of the year, and the Indian comrades who know England are explaining that I have brought the rain from Manchester.

By the state of my feet, every mosquito in India must also have greeted me, and I must confess I got a bit of a shock this morning when in the lavatory, going about my lawful occasions, a lizard ran across my feet.

Madura is a fairly large city, famous for its many sacred temples, some of which I am informed go back a thousand years and more. It is a textile centre, and an important railway depot.

One reason for the demonstrations all the way from Madras last night was because the railwaymen are very militant and well organised. This whole area is exceptionally strong in its support for the policy of the Communist Party of India.



*Christmas Day Elephant*

"White Christmas." Here it is 85 degrees in the shade, and the sun is pouring down from a cloudless blue sky.

We go to visit some interesting old buildings and then off to Hyderabad airport. We left for Madras at 2.30 p.m. and arrived at the airport in that city at 4.30 p.m.

What a welcome I received once again! What I liked was the number of children who handed me a single flower, or an orange, or a lime.

You know how at weddings confetti is showered on the Happy Couple; well, here I was showered with rose petals until it looked as though it was raining them from the sky. Roses, roses all the way, kind of thing.

I leave Madras at 8.20 p.m. for Madura, and thus spend Christmas Eve in a train. What a way to spend what is usually for me one of the happiest nights of the year in the bosom of my family!

However, here it is, and we will try to get some sleep, with thoughts of Peace on Earth in our mind. Certainly that has been the main theme of all my speeches.

I have now been in Bombay, Delhi, Amritsar, Jullandar, Agra, Calcutta, Hyderabad and Madras. A glance at the map seems to show that I've got around a little bit in my old age.

So the first phase of my visit to India comes to an end, and from tomorrow I expect to be fully occupied at the Third National Congress of the Communist Party of India, which closes on January 3.

I had a feeling after I had just written about getting some sleep that I may get other surprises. I did, but they will form the basis for tomorrow's epistle.

#### *Christmas Day.*

**W**HEN I got to the station at Madras last night I found it a seething mass of humanity.

Flags, flowers and banners everywhere. The working people of Madras had turned out in force to give a send-off to the delegates going to the Party Congress at Madura. The leaders of the Communist Party of India had been meeting in Madras, and I found myself travelling with them.

The train moved off amid scenes of tremendous excitement. A comrade suggested, "Comrade Pollitt, I suggest you lie down and get some sleep. You may need it before the night is over." I didn't know what he meant then, but I do now.

I noticed the Red Flag was firmly secured to our carriage window and only thought then some enthusiast had forgotten to take it away at Madras.

It turned out to be the signal for where we were travelling on the train. After an hour, the train stopped at a station and there were hundreds of people waiting to welcome and garland the principal Party leaders.

All in all it stopped at about 12 stations, and I had to be garlanded,

make a short speech, and sign autographs. It was about four o'clock this morning when we stopped at Golden Rock Station.

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Good God! After all the robbery that the British imperialists have carried out and the robbery by rich Indian princes, capitalists and landlords at present, that piece of "advice" is a piece of infernal impudence if ever there was one.

What a colossal task the Communist Party has in face of all this poverty, squalor, misery, caste and religious differences to improve the working and living conditions of the Indian masses.

The third congress of the Indian Communist Party opens in the morning.

*December 28.*

**O**N the way to the congress hall this morning I ran right into a shift of men and women textile workers coming out of the great Harvey Mill.

I had seen such scenes in Lancashire many times; indeed, once upon time I used to come out of Benson's Mill myself.

But how different this scene was. The women in saris were like every colour of the rainbow, and the men in scanty whites. How different these workers looked and conducted themselves after the thousands of other people I had seen in Madras.

These workers looked proud and strong, and certainly form the strong heart of the city.

The actual road to the congress was lined with cheering crowds, and tonight they seemed to be greater than ever.

The main business of the congress today has been to discuss the many amendments which had been sent in to the Programme of the Communist Party of India.

One wanted to delete a reference to a "single popular assembly" and substitute "a House of the People and a House of Nationalities."

Another amendment was moved on behalf of the steering committee of the congress, and it wanted to add to "use of Hindu as an all-India State language will not be compulsory" the words, "but will be encouraged for State intercourse and trade."

It is quite clear that certain tendencies of nationalism are quite strong in certain delegations, and also any Englishman would have no illusions about how this congress is convinced that British imperialism is the main enemy.

Finally, the programme, after amendment, was placed before the congress for its final decision and received a unanimous vote amid scenes of great enthusiasm.

At this point the six delegates from the Communist Party of Ceylon were introduced to the congress on their arrival and given a great ovation.

The next item was the Political Resolution of the Central Committee and the report of Comrade Ajoy Ghosh, the general secretary.

The debate will be resumed tomorrow.

I have now so many mosquito bites. I am convinced not only have I been bitten by every mosquito in India, but that fraternal delegations of these pests are being organised from many other countries.

Madura is represented in the Central Parliament by a Communist M.P.

I noticed from the train acre after acre of land devoted to producing rice, and it made a wonderful study of beautiful shades of green. But the condition of workers looking after these paddy fields I can only describe as dreadful.

*December 26.*

**H**OW good it is on this day to get up feeling so splendidly alive and vigorous!

Feeling so virile and clean inside and outside. No headaches, hangovers, or pains in the tummy through over-eating.

Or is it?

Anyhow, here we are. My table is adorned with telegrams and cards from Marjorie, Jean and Brian, the comrades at King Street, and from friends in India I do not know.

They all make a very colourful show indeed.

Worked all day studying the materials of the Party Congress, and had an exchange of opinion with the Central Committee about the position in our respective countries.

Just time before darkness fell after a sweltering day to go round the city of Madura.

What a vast contrast with other cities I have visited. It might be on another continent. Different and darker type of skin: more scantily clothed because of the heat. Women with what I thought hideous gadgets on their noses and ears.

Oh, what poverty! What a contrast between the magnificent building which houses the Bank and Haroys, the textile manufacturers. What soul-searing poverty and festering sores within the shade of the famous 900-year-old Madura Temple.

What workmanship, craftsmanship and labour went into the production of this temple and the King's Palace—and nowhere for hundreds to lay their heads.

I find it impossible to rhapsodise about art when before me is a long, dreadful queue of half-starved men, women and children waiting to be handed a bowlful of soup.

I cannot work up any feelings of awe as I look on the huge sacred tank, when all around it are little children with their swollen bellies, and beggars looking hideous with alleged "religious" white paste plastered all over their faces.

What I have seen today are conditions no human beings were ever meant to experience. No wonder the working people here have such splendid traditions of struggle. No wonder the Red Flag flies over one working-class area I visited, and there are none who dare pull it down.

When I got back to my room I read the newspapers, and came across a speech by the Chief Minister of Madras, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, deploring "petty thieving," and impressing upon the people their duty "to respect their conscience."

On my way to the congress hall, I noticed a blind man being led by a child of about six years of age. The child's care and tenderness to the blind man as he led him up the steps of the post office, telling him where to place his feet, was most touching to watch.

A very long and interesting discussion developed at the congress on the absence in the political resolution of a fundamental statement on the agrarian problem.

Scores of amendments had been put in on this vital issue, but it was recommended by the Steering Committee that no discussion could take place until the Central Committee placed its considered agrarian policy before the Party.

That did it, and the delegates really let themselves go. They stated they had heard there were differences in the leadership on this issue. They demanded to know what they were, and that the Party Congress had the right to discuss them.

The upshot was that a document be laid before the congress giving the opinions of many comrades leading the Party work in the villages and also a statement setting out some of the principal political differences which existed, and that time would be found for a special discussion.

After watching the congress proceedings very closely for four days, it is quite clear the delegates are in a very critical mood and not prepared to take anything for granted.

Fraternal greetings were read amid the most enthusiastic scene I have yet witnessed in this congress, from the Communist Party of Pakistan. This was as it should be in view of the tense situation between India and Pakistan, which has arisen out of the proposed U.S.-Pakistan alliance.

Interesting were the contributions made on the question of trade union unity, and I was especially glad to note the serious and thoughtful contribution made by a woman M.P. on the importance of the Party's work in the Central Council of States, House of the People, and the State Assemblies. She is one of the few women delegates present at the congress.

After three-and-a-half days' discussion the Political Resolution as amended was adopted.

*January 1.*

**W**OKE up early on this New Year's Day and wondered what 1954 will bring.

A knock on my door, jumped out of bed, opened the door to be greeted by the members of the staff of the guest house where I am staying.

They all wished me a Happy New Year, placed a beautiful garland round my neck, and presented me with the traditional token of love and affection—five limes from each one of them.

Very nice and thoughtful. They had let the New Year in with fruit, and Barney usually does it with a piece of coal.

Coming home very late last night, I was again horrified at the

The congress was greeted with important news this morning, when all the newspapers gave publicity to the fact that in the important elections which are to take place for the Travancore-Cochin State Legislative Assembly, an agreement had been reached between the four Left Parties to present a united front to the Congress candidates.

*December 29.*

**F**RATERNAL greetings read and applauded enthusiastically by the delegates to the Indian Communist Party congress included messages from:

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, of China, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Austria, Belgium, Sweden, Finland, New Zealand, the Labor-Progressive Party of Canada, the Workers' Party of Poland, and various groups in South Africa and India.

Fraternal greetings were also read from the Hungarian Workers' Party, British, Indian, Ceylonese and Pakistan students in London, and from a group of Durham miners to the miners of India.

I was then called upon to convey the fraternal greetings from the Communist Party of Britain, and received an ovation in tribute to the work of our own Party.

The hall is colourfully decorated, and a huge Red Flag has the hammer and sickle on it in a kind of silver paint.

The weather is terrifically hot and I admire the close attention and discipline of the delegates in remaining in their place throughout the sessions.

The congress proceedings opened this morning with Comrade Wickremasinghe conveying the fraternal greetings of the Communist Party of Ceylon. His speech was received with tremendous enthusiasm.

The debate was then resumed on the Political Resolution. Every phase of the resolution was thoroughly discussed with a highly critical note running throughout the discussion.

Among the topics taken up were the respective roles of British and American imperialism, the economic and agrarian crisis, the united front, the slogan of a united democratic government, issues connected with the question of people's democracy, linguistic problems, the struggle on the ideological front (on which I thought one of the best contributions was made), weaknesses in the Five Year Plan, and neglect of the agrarian problem.

Many amendments had been put in on the Political Resolution and the evening closed with discussing the first of such principal amendments.

*December 30 and 31.*

**I**HAVE just read a news item that in the prohibition area of South India there had been over one million cases tried in the courts for violation of the prohibition laws.

It must be a well-dug underground movement that has completely eluded me.

said, "Comrade Harry, you are an old man, and this may be your last chance to visit us."

Well, well. That shook me.

The congress opened this morning with a resolution on the Pakistan Pact with the U.S. There was no doubt from the discussion of the concern of the common peoples of India and Pakistan about the proposal of the U.S. to tie Pakistan to its war chariot.

After an exhaustive discussion in which stress was laid on the importance of strengthening peaceful relations between the working peoples of India and Pakistan, the resolution was adopted unanimously.

Fraternal greetings were also received from the Workers' Party of Rumania, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, and the fraternal delegate from the Communist Party of French India also conveyed greetings.

This makes a total of 26 fraternal greetings received by the Third National Party Congress of the Communist Party of India, revealing the importance attached to the key position India now occupies in the international situation, and the work of the Party.

A resolution was adopted demanding the release of all political prisoners, and one protesting against the refusal of the Indian Government to give visas to the fraternal delegates of the Communist Parties of Australia, France, Indo-China and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany.

There was a late session of the congress tonight, commencing at 10 p.m. and ending at 5 a.m. At this session the new Central Committee was elected, and also the new Control Commission.

The Communist Party of Madura organised a cultural evening and I would dearly like to have gone, but a stern sense of duty made me attend the congress. I am told it was a remarkable success and was attended by over 40,000 people.

Tonight, in preparation for the congress rally, every street in Madura seems to have red flags out and illuminated five-point stars with the sickle and hammer on them.

Across every street there is bunting and at many points arches welcoming the delegates have been erected. I saw one tonight, "Welcome to Harry Pollitt."

It looks like being a great day tomorrow.

*January 3.*

**W**ELL, well, it has turned out to be quite a day. As I went through Madura on my way to the Communist Party Congress, I found the town literally transformed.

You talk about decorations for a coronation. They weren't in it. Every house and shop, rickshaws, stalls, windows, buildings and streets were red with flags and bunting.

The delegates, after ending last night's session at five o'clock this morning, look a bit tired (I know I was) as the congress session was opened.

number of beggars in the streets, and the number of people sleeping in the streets.

I gather from the newspaper this morning that the problem of beggars and homeless people is very acute in the South of India, and that in Madras alone it is estimated that 7,500 beggars are operating in the streets.

I mentioned this figure to a comrade from Madras and he said it was a gross under-estimation of the actual number, as everybody living in Madras would confirm.

It is heart-breaking to see them. I only hope some of the old Indian hands on the steamer going home will start telling me of "the progressive and beneficent role the British have played in India".

The Congress opened this morning with the reading of fraternal greetings from the Communist Party of Indonesia, amid great applause.

Discussion was then resumed on the resolution on Party organisation after a clarification of certain points in it by the general secretary.

I was struck by the splendid speech of a woman comrade, in which she showed the great positive role the women of India have to play, and why the Communist Party should give greater attention in helping the women comrades and in winning more women into membership of the Party.

It was then announced that many amendments had been received to the organisation resolution, and it was decided to refer both the resolution and the amendments to the new Central Committee.

I had had an interesting exchange of opinion with the ten women delegates, and learned much from it. I undertook a number of obligations on behalf of our own Women's Department, which I am afraid will keep them busy for some time.

A night session of the Congress commenced at 9.30 p.m. and ended at 12.30 a.m. It was on the very complicated problems arising out of the agrarian crisis and there was tremendous interest in this discussion which at one time looked like lasting all night.

However, in the end the document introducing this discussion was also referred to the new Central Committee.

So back to my hotel. I tried to count from my window in the car how many people were sleeping in the streets. I had to give it up.

There they lay, men, women and children, amid dirt and filth, with cows and donkeys walking on them and over them, with rats crawling round them. Dreadful!

And that ended my New Year's Day.

*January 2.*

**T**ODAY delegation after delegation at the Communist Party congress asked me to visit their provinces and towns to address "the largest demonstration you have ever seen."

I would be in India another year if I accepted these requests.

It's a bit thought-provoking, however, when one comrade used what he thought was a clinching argument why I should stay. He

So ends my programme in India. I hope my visit has strengthened the bonds of Peace and Friendship between the British and Indian peoples.

I hope I have convinced those who have spoken to me, and the many, many thousands I have spoken to, that there is another Britain than that of the Hastings, Clives, Dwyers, Mountbattens, Lyttons and Churchills.

Everywhere I have been received with such respect and affection. Nothing has been too much for the comrades to do for my comfort. I appreciate it more than mere words can convey, and I have looked upon it as a tribute to the British Communist Party.

Now I'm dead beat. Tomorrow we start the long journey home.

*January 4 and 5.*

**T**HE congress officially ended at noon. The comrades responsible for the technical arrangements filed past the delegates, who expressed their warm appreciation of the tireless efforts put in.

Our veteran Indian comrade, Mirajkar, known to so many British trade unionists, then asked the delegates to stand and sing the Internationale. So ended another unforgettable experience in my life.

At 6.20 p.m. we boarded the train for Madras, after some moving scenes with the staff of the guest house where I had been staying and we were on the first stage of the long journey to London.

Arrived at Madras at 6.20 a.m. Going through the streets in pouring rain, I thought half the population of the city must be sleeping in the streets.

It's wicked to have to look upon such scenes. The plain fact is that it was in Madras and Calcutta that the British first established their footing, and it is still precisely in these cities that I have seen the worst conditions for the working people.

A wash-and-brush-up, then breakfast, during which, in the Victoria Hotel (Oh, shades of the old imperialist British Queen), the greatest wrestler in India was presented to me. What a giant!

I meet Comrades Ghosh and Dange, who have come to see me off at the airport. Leave Madras at 11.20 a.m., and arrive after a rather bumpy passage at Bombay about 3.15 p.m.

The barometer shows 91 degrees in the shade. I had read in the plane that on the 3rd there was a heavy fog in London and that some football matches had to be cancelled.

Met some old friends at the airport, and then off to an hotel in a car which I was informed, once it started, under no circumstances must stop in case it never started again.

I observed with a watchful eye what went on during the drive, and came to the conclusion that the London taxi driver knows nothing about ins and outs, and is the most polite and thoughtful driver in the world compared to the driver that I had.

Some articles to write. Just about finished when the comrade who has looked after my welfare, been everywhere with me, came rushing

The chairman announced that the central committee had unanimously elected Comrade Ajoy Ghosh as general secretary of the Communist Party of India.

I was then asked to give my impressions of the congress, which I did.

We now had to get ready for the procession and congress rally. Now I've written many times during my tour of India (and I've thought it a lot more)—"There can be no more surprises for me." I was mistaken.

As we walked to the starting point of the procession I noticed thousands and thousands of men, women and children were already lined up to march. It looked as if there was a veritable ocean of red flags moving in the breeze.

Forty to fifty thousand people had come from every little town and village within a hundred miles of Madura.

Hundreds of bullock carts, packed with peasants and their families, had travelled through the night. Thousands had walked all night. Hundreds upon hundreds had climbed on trains going to Madura without tickets. The railway officials had asked for extra police so that all these people could be made to pay their fares before they got out of the train.

The railway workers let the crews of these trains know about this decision, and the trains were stopped just outside Madura and the people without tickets just got off the trains and walked away. Lovely piece of work!

While waiting for the procession to start, I noticed that one of the many sacred temples with which Madura seems to abound was decorated with red flags and some of the officials were holding red flags in their hands. So I asked my interpreter to come with me while I asked a few questions.

I only asked one, however, and that was: "Why are you holding red flags? Are you Communists?" to which I received the illuminating reply:

"We are not Communists, but the working people here do not get sufficient wages to live upon. There are too many unemployed, and when there is little money about there is less for our temple and we sympathise with the Communist Party because it fights for the poor."

At 3 p.m. the procession moved off, headed by the elephant covered with the red flag and its keeper sitting with two red flags crossed in his hands. I never saw a man who looked so proud, dignified and "monarch of all he surveyed" as that man on the elephant.

I spoke, but how I wished I could speak in the Tamil language to this overwhelming crowd of people who had demonstrated this day their love, affection and trust for and in the Communist Party of India and what it means to the working people of India.

So came to its close a day such as I have never witnessed anywhere in the world before, and which will be enshrined in my memory as long as I live.



dition that all the guards carried rifles. Hoped it was not because of me.

Bank officials very nice. C.W.S. a good name, and I came out with the doings. It went like a house on fire. I never discover how many relatives I have until I go abroad.

Had a nice lunch and lay down for forty winks, which turned out to be a dead-beat sleep lasting four hours.

Went to a reception. Met many prominent citizens, all of whom (pardon my modesty) thanked me for my speeches about peace and warning of the danger to India of the U.S.-Pakistan military alliance.

Back to my hotel. Phone ringing and ringing asking for press interviews. Will I be glad to get on the Strathmore? I'll say I will. I have an idea that when I do, I shall wake up at Aden.

But we shall see.

On January 7 I got on board the Strathmore at 11.30 a.m. The comrades very disappointed that I would not allow any big send-off. But I was firm about this. Comrade Sanyal, who has travelled all over India with me and looked after me with such great care, came with me.

Went down to my cabin. Very nice and roomy. We shook hands.

Soon I am besieged by Indian pressmen wanting me to give them my impressions of India. I did. Then lay down and fell asleep until I heard the ship's siren. It was 3 p.m., and I found we were moving from the dockside. Remained on deck until Bombay was out of sight.

Went to sleep again. Woke up in time for dinner. Then paced the deck for a while before realising prohibition was over.

In bed by 9 p.m., and let there be no mistake, I slept the sleep of the just—*sans* mosquitoes, lizards and flying beetles.

So another chapter in my life has ended. I can only hope I did some good while in India.



### *Reunion*

into my room. Never have I seen the light of triumph shine so brightly in any man's eye.

"Harry, I've got you a drink just as you are about to leave my native land. It's permitted by law, and we are not breaking any regulations. It's sold in all respectable shops." He produced a bottle of Hall's wine!

The label said it was good for "improving appetite, overcoming fatigue, irritableness, depression, shortness of breath, dyspepsia, constipation, and certain forms of skin trouble."

Though I have none of these ailments, especially the last one, it tasted like nectar to me, despite the fact that it is manufactured in Bow, London, E.3.

I even forgot how when I worked in Towlers Boiler Shop in Bow in 1919, I used to hold my nostrils when going over Stink Pot Bridge to get there.

*January 6 and 7.*

**I** HAD a haircut today that really makes me look a bit of a criminal. Then I did some shopping.

Went into Cook's to cash a traveller's cheque. It was a C.W.S. one. They do not do business with the C.W.S., but kindly told me where I could cash it.

Went to the National Bank of India; noticed with some slight trepi-

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